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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 000494

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TAGS: PGOV PINS PTER PHUM PE

SUBJECT: HUMALA DOGGED BY ALLEGATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS  
VIOLATIONS

REF: LIMA 453

Classified By: Political Counselor Alex Margulies. Reasons 1.4 (b,d).

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Summary  
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¶1. (C) Ultra-nationalist, anti-system presidential candidate Ollanta Humala has recently been dogged by allegations that he committed human rights violations while serving as a Peruvian Army Officer in the Upper Huallaga Valley in the early 1990s. The Human Rights Coordinator, an umbrella group of human rights NGOs, announced plans to file official charges against Humala for at least five cases of forced disappearance and three of torture. Humala's case has become a cause celebre for human rights activists, who hope to further their so far frustrated campaign against impunity for violators from the '80s and '90s. Humala himself apparently confessed to a former classmate and US Military Officer in the late '90s that he had been connected to "acts of which he was not proud," including torture. As the revelations about his prior conduct continue to surface, Ollanta Humala's "Mr. Clean" image as a straight-shooting, untainted outsider has been called into question. End Summary.

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Humala = "Captain Carlos"  
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¶2. (U) The Peruvian television news magazine "Panorama" broke the story on 1/22 that anti-system candidate Ollanta Humala was, in fact, "Captain Carlos Gonzales," a pseudonym for a military officer and human rights violator who had led anti-guerrilla actions around the Madre Mia Army base in the upper Huallaga Valley in 1992. Reporters traveled to the region and showed Ollanta's picture to several locals, who identified him as "Captain Carlos," and stated that he had been responsible for massacres and disappearances. (Comment: Some of the locals who fingered Humala were surprised when reporters told them that he was now a presidential candidate, a fact that both tended to buttress their observations and is a commentary on the isolation from political life in remote regions of Peru. End Comment.)

¶3. (U) Further testimonials of Humala's alleged victims surfaced in the press on 2/5 and 2/6, including accounts of forced disappearances and mistreatment of a couple, Zonia y Cirilio Rosales, who owned a small pharmacy and soda stand in front of the military base Ollanta Humala commanded in Madre Mia. Allegedly, when the couple tried to collect accumulated debts owed them by soldiers stationed at the base and by

"Captain Carlos'" local girlfriend ("Milena"), Humala led a raid on their house with several of his men. During the break-in, one soldier stuck his pistol in Cirilio Rosales' mouth and others beat Zonia Rosales and shaved her head, all in front of the couple's children. The soldiers also robbed the Rosales of savings in dollars and gold they had stored at home.

¶4. (U) Since the Humala story broke, Alejandro Silva, a representative of the Human Rights Coordinator, an umbrella organization of human rights NGOs, has given several public interviews in which he has confirmed that Ollanta Humala was, in fact, Captain Carlos Gonzalez, and was likely guilty of the accusations against him. Silva along with Sofia Macher, a former Truth and Reconciliation member and now a legal representative for the Institute for Legal Defense (IDL), told the press on 2/5 that they would soon file formal charges against Humala for five cases of forced disappearance and three of torture. Humala is already facing six criminal charges filed against him by Independent Moralizing Front (FIM) Congressman Gustavo Pacheco (Reftel).

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Humala Guilty Say Human Rights Activists  
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¶5. (C) Silva explained his certainty about Ollanta Humala's role as a human rights violator in a meeting 1/31. He said that by crossing several different streams of information about Humala -- including his service record, the nature of his training (which involved intelligence and counter-subversive work), his physical characteristics, and the types of operations carried out in the Upper Huallaga in

the early '90s -- he had concluded that Humala was indeed "Captain Carlos Gonzales" and was responsible for the human rights violations alleged. Both Carlos Tapia and Javier Ciurlizza of the Catholic University's Institute for Human Rights (IDEPUC) seconded Silva's view. They told Poloffs on 2/2, that virtually anyone who held a military leadership position in the upper Huallaga during 1991-1992, when Ollanta Humala served there, had to be involved in human rights abuses. At the time, the Army was regularly isolating and carrying out extrajudicial killings of Sendero sympathizers, often dumping the bodies into rivers. (Note: Panorama's 1/22 broadcast quoted locals who said that they had seen bodies floating down an area river as the result of a massacre ordered by "Captain Carlos Gonzalez," a.k.a. Ollanta Humala. End Note.)

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Humala Confesses?  
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¶6. (C) Humala has publicly dismissed the accusations, saying that he has "a clean conscience," and that he welcomes an investigation. Nonetheless, his conscience may not be as clear as he indicates. A U.S. Military Officer who befriended Humala in the late '90s while studying in Peru informed the Embassy that Humala had spoken to him of his years in the fight against Sendero. In the officer's words, "He (Humala) talked on several occasions about being in the mountains as a Lieutenant and of having committed some acts of which he was not proud.... He talked of having killed rebels and of some torture techniques used (electric shock, beatings, rapes). (I) don't think he had the stomach for rape, but knew of it happening."

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Humala's Campaign Struggles to Respond  
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¶7. Humala's campaign has counter-attacked in response to the revelations of human rights abuses. The candidate's press spokesman, Daniel Abugattas, charged on 2/5 that local Channel 2 owner Baruch Ivcher had confiscated a video that proved that the Unidad Nacional (UN) Alliance, which supports

rival candidate Lourdes Flores Nano, had paid people to accuse Humala. Abugattas' claims have received no corroboration and have a number of internal contradictions, including misidentification of the journalists allegedly involved in the video's "confiscation" and the fact that, according to press reports, the video itself contains further testimony damaging to Humala. Ivcher has denied the charges and is demanding a retraction from Abugattas. Ivcher is threatening to file a criminal libel complaint if none is forthcoming.

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Comment:  
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¶8. (C) In the short run, revelations about Ollanta Humala's role in human rights abuses create another headache for a candidate who is facing rebellions in his own party, accusations that his congressional list is filled with corrupt opportunists, and charges that his second Vice President committed sexual harassment against a former student (Reftel).

¶9. (C) For their part, the Human Rights groups, composed for the most part of ex-Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CVR) members, say they will pursue this case doggedly. They are frustrated with what they see as the continued impunity of many human rights violators from the 80s and 90s, and they regard the Humala case as an opportunity to further their (so far frustrated) fight to bring such persons to belated justice. End Comment.

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